and autonomous functioning of the Cooperative Societies coming under the purview of this Act.

The Government of India is finalising a National Policy on Cooperatives in consultation with the State Governments with the objective to facilitate all round development of the Cooperatives and their economic viability and to ensure that they work as autonomous, self reliant and democratically managed institutions.

A Scheme for development and promotion of Cooperatives for weaker sections such as Construction Labour, Forest Labour, Rickshaw-Pullers, Washermen, Cobblers, Vendors, etc. is in operation, with the objective to organise cooperatives of weaker sections to improve their economic conditions. Like-wise, a scheme for organisation and development of cooperatives exclusively for women aimed at economic betterment with the objective to focus special attention upon the needs of women and providing assistance for taking up economic activities in agro-based commercial/industrial sectors, is also in operation.

A proposal to revamp the Cooperative Credit Structure is under active consideration of the Government. The concept of Business Development Planning has also been introduced to increase and diversify the business of the Cooperative Societies.

The Cooperative Banks are being encouraged to organise Self-Help Groups within the framework of the Cooperative Sector.

Imparting IT Education

* 176. DR. M.N. DAS: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that many institutions are sprouting up in different cities and towns of India to impart education in Information Technology;

(b) if so, whether Government have formulated quality-modalities or standards for granting recognition to such institutions; and

(c) which body or bodies will be responsible for granting recognition or affiliation to such institutions?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) It is a fact that institutions have been mushrooming in the area of computer education all over the country,

(b) The Government have a scheme to ensure quality standards in Private Computer Training Institutes by accrediting institutes in the non-formal sector for 4 level of courses namely O (Foundation Level), A (Advanced Diploma), B (MCA), C (M-Tech) based on laid down quality standards in the non-formal sector.

(c) Department of Electronics Accreditation of Computer Courses (DOEACC) Society, an autonomous body of Ministry of Information Technology, Government of India, is implementing a Joint Scheme of Ministry of Information Technology (MIT) and all India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). This Society is responsible for granting accreditation to such institutions for each level.

De-recognition of SADR

* 177. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister *of* EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has, recently, de-recognised the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR);

(b) if so, the date on which the SADR was recognised;

(c) what were the compelling reasons for the de-recognition; and

(d) the number of cases, if any, when *India* de-recognised a foreign Government after having recognised it?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) 1 October 1985.

(c) Since our recognition of the SADR in 1985, the situation had remained under constant review. In 1993, we had withdrawn the concurrent accreditation to the SADR of our Ambassador in Algiers. Thereafter, the agreement to the appointment of a SADR Ambassador was withheld since 1994. The latest decision was based on an objective assessment of relevant trends and facts, including our overall support for the UN efforts. Maintaining our recognition of SADR was tantamount to ignoring ground realities and pre-judging the final outcome of referendum, if and when it takes place.